

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

AUGUST 3, 2015 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

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How William Wilberforce Shared His Faith

During our summer travels, we've been listening to the biography of [William Wilberforce: Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery](#), by Eric Metaxas.

The story has been fantastic in unfolding the formative events in his life.

I've been blessed by reading about his conversion, the influence of other famous leaders from that time like John Newton (the song writer of Amazing Grace), Charles and John Wesley, and George Whitefield.

What caught my attention the other morning was a description of Wilberforce's evangelism habits, that developed both out of his personality, but also out of his personal relationship with Christ.

I quote [from the book](#) (and reformatted for online reading and emphasis added):

William Wilberforce's conversion to Christianity in 1785— what he called his “Great Change”— was without question for him the central and most important event of his life.

Indeed, as far as Wilberforce was concerned, faith in Jesus Christ was the central and most important thing in life itself, so it can hardly surprise us that sharing this faith with

others was central and important to Wilberforce too.

And so, everywhere he went, and with everyone he met, he tried, as best he could, to bring the conversation around to the question of eternity.

Wilberforce would *prepare lists of his friends' names and next to the entries make notes on how he might best encourage them in their faith*, if they had faith, and toward a faith if they still had none.

He would list subjects he could bring up with each friend that might launch them into a conversation about spiritual issues.

He even called these subjects and questions “launchers” and was always looking for opportunities to introduce them.

His efforts to draw his friends into conversation about “first things” sometimes failed, and the objects of his kindness may on occasion have felt more like his quarry.

But in many cases Wilberforce’s conversations bore great fruit, and some who hadn’t known it was possible to be sincerely Christian and yet witty and charming found in Wilberforce an inspiration.

If he, being so brilliant and sociable and wealthy— and a close friend of the prime minister’s!— could be so serious about his faith, perhaps it might be acceptable after all.

It was in his public person that Wilberforce may have done the most to “make goodness fashionable.”

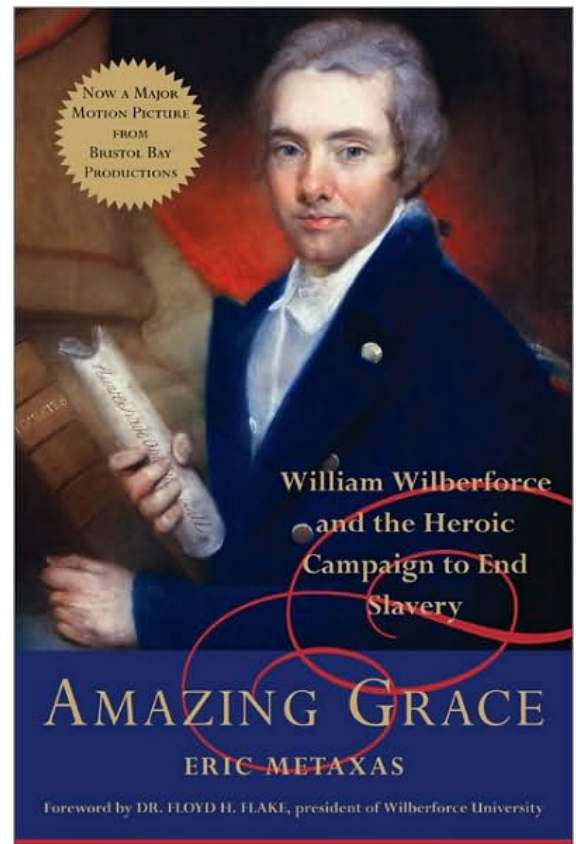
An indisputably captivating figure who defied easy categorization (not that many didn’t try), Wilberforce became something akin to an icon for serious Christian faith.

But he was certainly no moralizing lummoX.

His brilliance and good cheer and wealth and charm and obvious earnestness made him too slippery to grasp easily.

For a nation that knew serious Christianity principally through the black-robed figures of John Wesley, John Newton, and George Whitefield, Wilberforce was an undeniably fascinating and intriguing figure.

Source: Metaxas, Eric (2009-10-13). [Amazing Grace](#) (Kindle Locations 2881-2887). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.



The Evangelism Habits of William Wilberforce



*Evangelistic
Habits
of
William
Wilberforce*

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Wilberforce lived out much of what I've compiled in this article: [10 ways to kickstart your Personal Evangelism this Summer](#), but I want to highlight a few items here

1. Non-believing friends

"I have no non-Christian relationships" confessed one of my [evangelism coaching](#) clients (shared with permission).

"I was taking an inventory of my personal relationships and discovered that I had surrounded myself entirely with Christians."

In my experience, I could easily guess that many of these, if not all, would confess the same lack of relationships with people who do not walk with the Lord.

A Christian without an unchurched friend is like a dash of salt in the ocean: it doesn't do anyone any good and, frankly, no one even knows it's there. — Bill Tenny-Brittian, [Hitchhiker's Guide To Evangelism](#)

Wilberforce realized that he had influence among his non-believing friends. His awakening to faith did not destroy his prior relationships nor remove him from being an influence for Christ.

2. Prayer for his list of non believing friends

Wilberforce made a prayer list of friends whom he'd like to see following Jesus.

We might mentally agree to the the idea, but to actually make the list and use it may still be a challenge.

Here is one way to think through [how to make this prayer list](#).

The idea is to get beyond the generic "I pray for Jose and Martha" and into more specific areas.

For example:

- Give me [eyes to see their spiritual thirst](#).
- Give me opportunity to speak with them.
- Give them a thirst, help me to see it.
- Is God inviting me to spend a little more time with them?
- What is the next "do" with them? Call? [Coffee](#)? Cookout?

- Help them move another step closer to you.
- Reveal yourself to them in undeniable ways.

3. He looked for their spiritual thirst

Wilberforce wondered about how to have a conversation with them.

People are in [different places in their spiritual journey](#). As Wilberforce wrote each name, he pondered what might their next step be?

If they are hostile to God, how would he pray that they may [start](#) seeking God?

If they are seeking God, how can would he pray that they would talk with him about how he found God?

If they are studying the Bible in their search, he would like to pray that God's word would speak.

In other words, Wilberforce seemed to pray in accordance with the work that God might be doing in their spiritual life already.

4. Wilberforce listened for Guidance

He listened for God's direction about when to speak of the church, when to speak of Christ, and even whom to add to that list of people to pray for.

He looked for [those divine appointments](#).

He [listened for spiritual thirst](#).

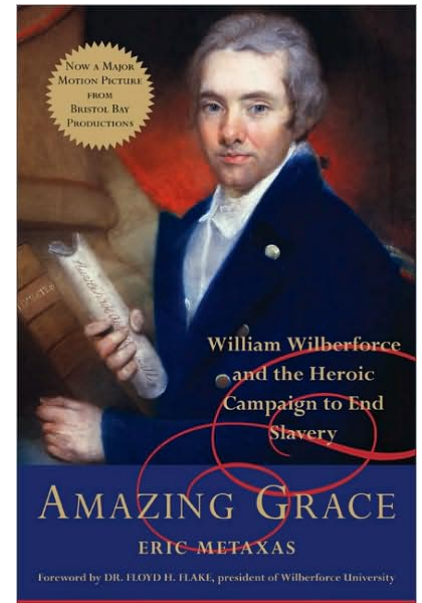
Sometimes, Wilberforce took the initiative with his conversation launchers. Other times, he was sensitive to topics or conversational threads that could bridge to spiritual matters.

Enjoy reading the book.

To learn more about Wilberforce, I recommend this the biography: [William Wilberforce: Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery](#), by Eric Metaxas.

This is an affiliate link (I'll get a few nickles) to the paperback version. I'll still get a few nickles if you purchase any other version of the book (like Kindle or audio)

Wilberforce image: In the Public Domain, Painting by John Russell



Filed Under: [Personal Evangelism](#) Tagged With: [conversation skill](#), [evangelism skill](#), [evangelism skills](#)

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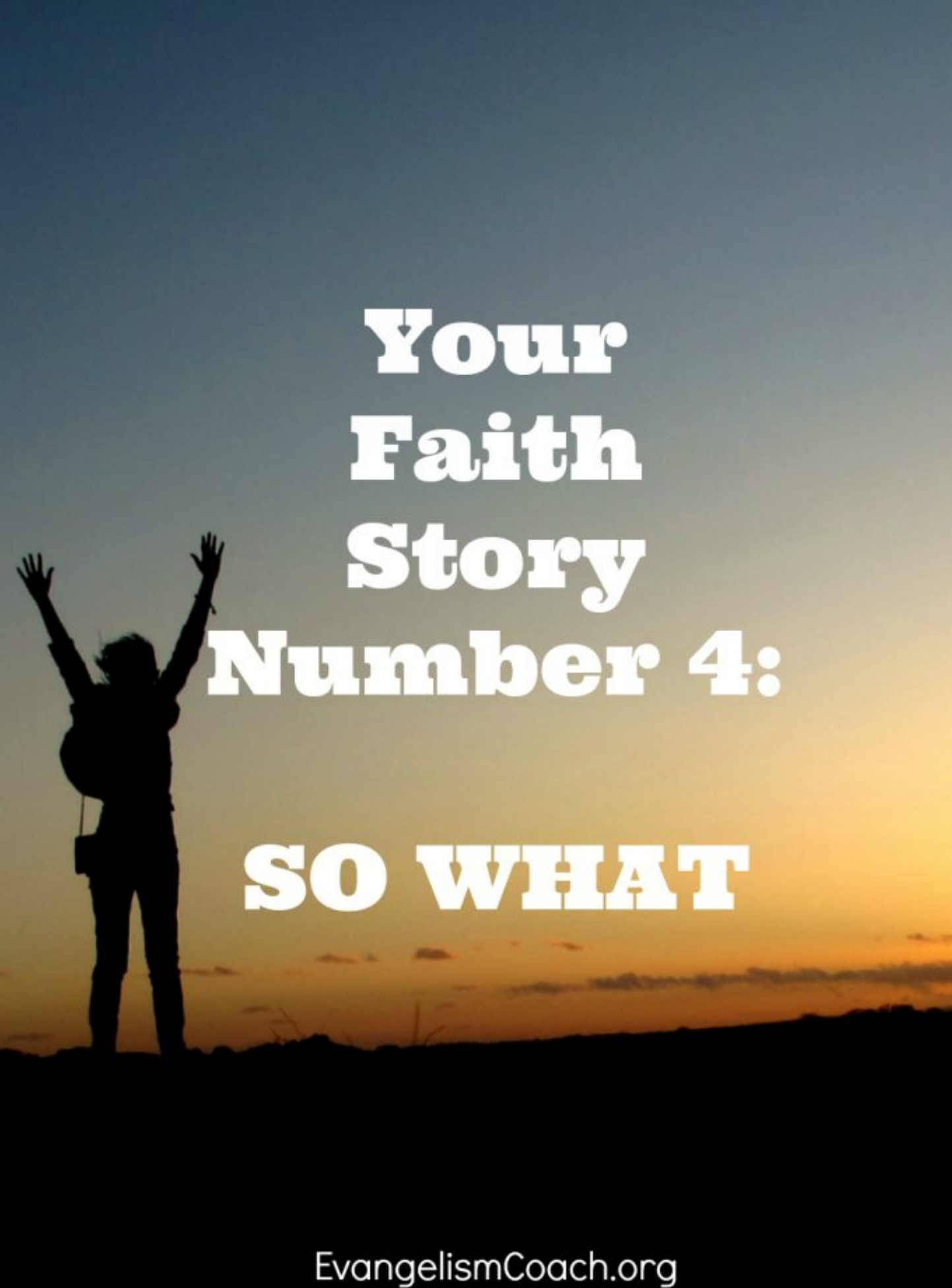
1 COMMENT

Faith Story Number 4: The So What Story

One challenge to shortening a personal testimony is to get at this core question:

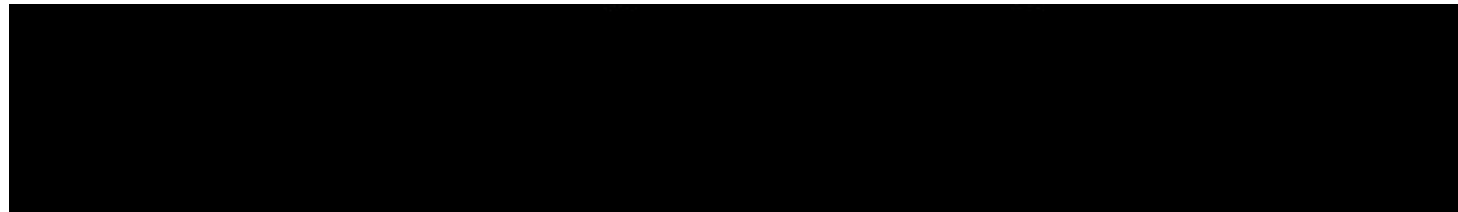
What difference has Jesus made in your life?

This is the “So what” story that is unique and personal to you.

A silhouette of a person standing on a dark horizon, with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or triumph. The background is a gradient of a sunset or sunrise sky, transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. The text is overlaid on this background.

Your Faith Story Number 4: SO WHAT

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It is easier to see an example than it is to describe.

[Check out this video \(shared here as well\)](#)

More than one So What Story

What difference has Jesus made in your life?

This question is not only applicable for the moment of your conversion.

Even if you grew up in church and always knew that you were a follower of Christ, there are examples of transformation in your life.

The So What story also applies to the ongoing work of the Jesus in your life by the Holy Spirit.

For example, I have been a follower of Jesus since 1985.

I was a 15 year old teenager that didn't have a lot of life experience. I grew up in a [healthy](#) household with parents who loved me.

There have been marvelous works of transformation in my life.

- Forgive a severe betrayal when I was in my late 20s
- A sense of purpose and destiny.
- Healing damaged emotions for hurtful events.
- Creation of a healthy marriage.
- Adventures in living into God's will for my life.
- Despair transformed to gratitude and hope.

The So What Story has a simple outline



These stories have a basic before / after outline.

They are snippets that describe

- Who you were before and who you are now.
- What life was like before, and what life is like now.
- What emotions you had before, and how they have been transformed.
- The wounds you had in the past, and how they have been healed.
- The addictions you struggled with and how you are experiencing victory now.

Before I met Jesus for the first time, I was searching for unconditional love.

Before I followed Jesus, I had no direction in my life.

Before I allowed Jesus to bring healing to my emotions, I lived in patterns defined by those experiences.

After I met Jesus, I found unconditional love.

After I followed Jesus, I found direction, purpose, and hope.

After I allowed Jesus to touch those wounded places, I experienced an indescribable joy and wholeness and new life.

You see them in the video above and in this video below. As I watched this video, I was struck by the power of the cross. Real lives changed by a real Jesus.

Can you reduce your testimony to two sides of a poster board?

Take the “So What” Story a Step further.

The two videos above capture the essence of a “So What” Story on two sides of a piece of cardboard.

What if you could reduce it [to two words as in the video below](#):



I’ve experienced this life transformation first hand.

The label that Jesus changed for me:

- Aimless to Directed
- No Purpose to Purpose
- Unable to Love Correctly to Beloved
- Ignorantly Lost to Gratefully Found.

The So What story also answers this question:

Why is Jesus precious to you?

Jesus may be precious to you because He has forgiven you.

Jesus may be precious to you because He is guiding you in this life.

Jesus may be precious to you because He has healed you.

Jesus is Pastor, Savior, Friend, Healer, Redeemer, Friend, Bread of Life, Lord of All.

What image of Jesus speaks to you most deeply?

I bet there is one image of Jesus that speaks to you more than all the others.

That can help you answer the question that my friend Easum has asked:

What is it about your relationship with Jesus that your friend can't live without?

What was your “So What Story”?

In the comment field, give a short summary (no more than 10 words) of the label transformation that Jesus worked in your life?

The Faith Story Series:

1. [The What's New Story](#)
2. [The Journey Story](#)
3. [The Gospel Story](#)
4. [The So What Story](#)

Resource

Of what value **to you** is your relationship with Jesus?

The more I explore the depths of that value, the meaning of that word, I notice something bubbling from inside of me.

I want to tell somebody.

Start here with this [MP3 Download on Evangelism Training](#) from the store (\$10) to help you see where you need to grow.

It's a 80 minute audio file that takes just a few minutes to download, but it may help you answer the question:

What can you do in the next 90 days to grow in your evangelism skills?

Filed Under: [Personal Evangelism](#), [Personal Testimony](#), [Video](#) Tagged With: [evangelism skills](#), [personal evangelism skills](#), [Personal Testimony](#), [personal witness](#), [Transformation](#), [witness training](#)

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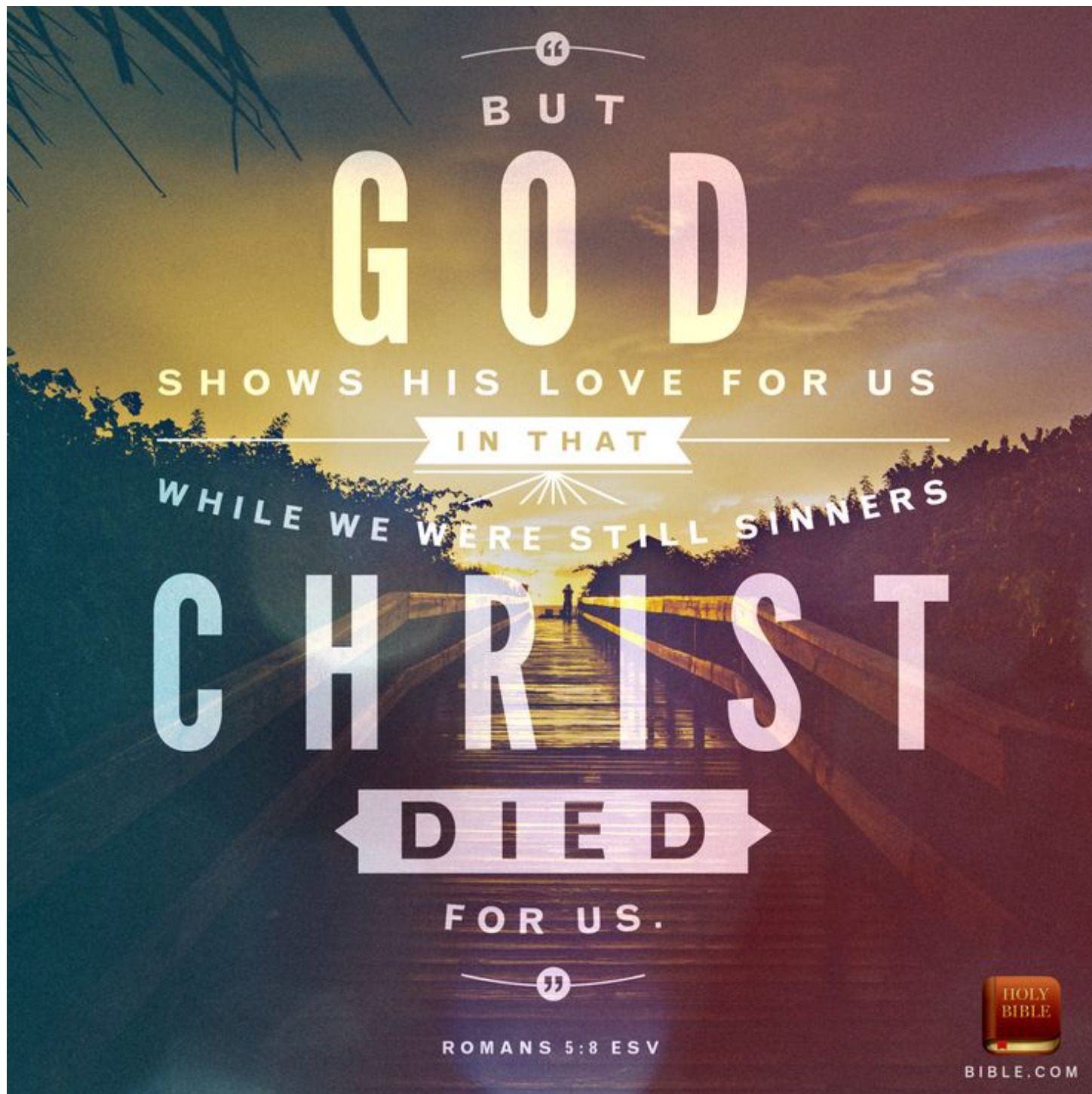
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Story Number 3: The Gospel Story

*My hope is in the Lord Who gave Himself for me,
And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.
For me He died, For me He lives,
And everlasting life and light He freely gives*

— Hymn, For me he died, for me he lives

God's love has worked in your life



Source: YouVersion

Jesus died for you.

His death paid the price for the forgiveness of your sins.

His death and resurrection paved the way for you to enjoy fellowship with God forever.

You have been reconciled to the Father and you can now discover the outrageous love of the Father for you.

It's the greatest story every told. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Filed Under: [Personal Evangelism](#) Tagged With: [gospel outline](#), [gospel presentation](#), [Gospel Script](#), [gospel scripts](#), [gospel story](#), [Personal Evangelism](#), [personal witnessing](#), [script](#), [scripts](#), [witnessing](#)

JUNE 1, 2015 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

3 COMMENTS

Six Evangelism Styles – A Video Summary

Lee Strobel shares a quick video synopsis of the 6 styles of personal evangelism.

The material came from [Becoming a Contagious Christian](#), Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg.

In the book, [Becoming a Contagious Christian](#), Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg point out that there are a variety of different evangelism styles.

- Confrontational: Peter, Acts 2.
- Intellectual / Philosophical: Paul, Acts 17.
- Testimonial: Blind Man, John 9
- Invitational: Woman at the Well, John 4
- Serving: Dorcas (Tabitha), Acts 9: 36ff
- Signs and Wonders: First Corinthians 2:1-5.

To this list, I would add “Chance Conversations,” based on [Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch](#)

The greatest contribution this book makes is the [recognition of various evangelism styles](#).